

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE, XF
SUBJECT: DECEMBER 12-13 SYRIAN MEDIA REVIEW

1. MEDIA STRESSED EFFORTS TO BEGIN UNIFICATION OF
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS. PRESS BANNERED:
"LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN IMPLEMENTING ITS TASK
AIMING FIRST AT UNIFYING INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SECOND
ENABLING ADMINISTRATION TO SPEED UP CONSTRUCTION WORK."
PRIMIN HUSS EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT SUCCESS IN UNIFYING
BROADCASTING OPERATION AND HOPE THAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS WILL SOON
FOLLOW SUIT. HE SCHEDULED MEETING WITH LEBANESE SECURITY OFFICIALS
TO DISCUSS UNIFICATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY APPARATUS. PRESS
NOTED THAT PRES. SARKIS WILL HEAD DEC. 14 MEETING OF
MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO PREPARE PROGRAM FOR FOLLOWING
DAY'S CABINET SESSION.

2. MEDIA PUBLICIZED MEETING BETWEEN PRES. ASAD AND KAMAL
ASSAD TO REVIEW "LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON AND
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CONTINUING PROGRESS IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND RETURN OF

NORMAL LIFE."

3. ACCORDING TO SANA RELEASE, SHIPMENT OF 45,000 BLANKETS SUPPLIED BY UN TO LEBANON SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE DEC. 13 AT BEIRUT AIRPORT.

4. PRESS COVERAGE OF SETTLEMENT EFFORTS FOCUSED ON EDITORIALS AND STATEMENTS BY MAHMUD RIYAD. ACCORDING TO AL-THAWRAH, RIYAD DESCRIBED UNGA RES. CALLING FOR GENEVA CONFERENCE BEFORE END OF MARCH 1977 WITH PLO PARTICIPATION AS VICTORY FOR ARAB DIPLOMACY WHICH HAS MOVED PALESTINIAN ISSUE TO NEW STAGE. HE URGED PALESTINIAN LEADERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS USUCCESS AND SPEED UP THEIR CONTACTS TO AGREE ON UNIFIED POSITION REGARDING COMING PHASE.

5. MEDIA CONTINUED TO PUBLICIZE ARRIVAL OF F-15'S TO ISRAEL. PRESS CAPTIONED: "ISRAEL ESCALTES ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST UN AND AMERICA DELIVERS TO IT NEW BATCH OF PLANES."

6. DEC. 12 AL-BAATH EDITORIAL EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAEL POSSIBLE: "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO REACH AGREEMENT AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT ISRAEL WOULD WITHDRAW ONE METER IF ARABS DO NOT FORCE IT TO DO SO. ARABS CANNOT FORCE IT WITHOUT THEIR MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH, AND THEY CANNOT BE STRONG WITHOUT UNIFYING THEIR EFFORTS AND MOVING ACCORDING TO JOINT ACTION PLANS (DRAWN UP BY) CONFRONTATION STATES AND OCTOBER WAR PARTNERS WITH SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION OF ENTIRE ARAB NATION. THIS UNDERLIES HISTORIC NECESSITY OF JOINT MOVE BY SYRIA AND EGYPT."

7. DECEMBER 13 AL-BAATH EDITORIAL REGRETTEED "SOME ARAB NEWSPAPERS HAD FALLEN UNDER UNFUSTIFIED IMPORESSION THAT TRAIN OF SETTLEMENT ABOUT TO START MOVING FROM GENEVA." EDITORIAL QUESTIONED WHETHER ENOUGH PRESSURE COULD BE EXERTED ON ISRAEL TO FORCE IT TO ACCEPT ARAB CONDITIONS OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT, "ISRAEL AND FORCES SUPPORTING IT NOT IN HURRY TO REACH SETTLEMENT AND ONLY PLAN TO INJECT INTO REGION WHIRLPOOL OF INEFFECTIVE CONTROVERSY AND UNCLASSIFIED

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IDSCUSSIONS THAT COULD CREATE DISAGREEMENTS AND (PARALYZE) PREPARATIONS FOR RECOVERING LAND THROUGH MOBILIZATION OF ARAB MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POTENTIALS." EDITORIAL CONCLUDED BY REMINDING READERS THAT ARABS MUST RELY UPON THEIR OWN STRENGTH TO REGAIN THEIR RIGHTS RATHER THAN CREATE IMPRESSION THAT THEY SHOULD STAND BY PASSIVELY TO AWAIT SETTLEMENT.

8. COMMENT: MEDIA CONTINUE TO DOWNPLAY TENSIONS IN

LEBANON; ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS AGAINST EDDE AND CHAMOUN
NOT MENTIONED. AL-BAATH EDITORIALS SERVE TO COUNTERACT
EUPHORIA SPREADING AMONG SOME ELEMENTS OF ARAB PRESS THAT
1977 WILL BE YEAR OF SETTLEMENT BY INVOKING TRADITIONAL
SYRIAN VIEW THAT REAL PROGRESS TOWARD SETTLEMENT ONLY
POSSIBLE IF BASED ON POSITION OF ARAB STRENGTH AND UNITY,
PRIMARILY BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. THUS, WHILE SYRIAN
MEDIA TRYING TO INFORM U.S. THAT OPPORTUNITY EXISTS FOR
MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE, MEDIA ALSO BUSILY ENGAGED IN PROMOTING
VIEW WITHIN SYRIA AND AMONG OTHER ARABS THAT HARD WORK TO
COORDINATE JOINT POSITIONS BEST WAY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
OPPORTUNITY.
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